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REPORT:

A. Border Related News Media

**North Country visit: NY US senators on Adirondack tour
Plattsburgh Press Republic - August 12, 2011**

Both of New York's U.S. senators will be in the North Country, where together they'll make public appearances that focus on the Adirondack region's economic issues. Democratic Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are scheduled to appear today in Saranac Lake, Long Lake and Lake Clear. Their first stop this morning is North Country Community College in Saranac Lake, where they'll host a roundtable on rural health

care for veterans. Schumer and Gillibrand will next head to Long Lake, where they'll hold another roundtable, this one on economic development in the North Country. The third stop will be the Adirondack Regional Airport in Lake Clear, outside Saranac Lake, for another economic development discussion. Gillibrand also plans to visit Bombardier Transportation in Plattsburgh this afternoon to announce her new agenda to create more high-tech manufacturing jobs.

Invasive species rule threatens St. Lawrence shipping
CBC News - August 10, 2011

A New York state regulation intended to protect the St. Lawrence Seaway from invasive species may cripple shipping and hit Canada's economy hard, the shipping industry warns. The new state regulation, which goes into effect in 2013, requires all ships entering New York waters to carry on-board water treatment systems and show they have extremely low levels of organisms in ballast water that may include invasive species. "Close to a quarter of the gross national product ... would be dramatically affected by that measure," said Jean Aubry-Morin, executive vice-president of corporate sustainability at the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, the Canadian non-profit group that co-manages the seaway with the U.S.-based Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corp. A 2008 study by scientists from the University of Notre Dame and the University of Wyoming found invasive species cost the eight U.S. states bordering the Great Lakes \$200 million a year. For example, zebra mussels, which arrived in the 1980s, clog intake pipes, sink navigational buoys and compete with local species for food. According to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, about 60 new invasive species have arrived in the Great Lakes since the St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959. Many were carried from other parts of the world in ballast water, which fill tanks in the hulls of ships to keep them balanced. Bruce Bowie, president of the Canadian Shipowners Association, said preventing invasive species from entering the seaway is important, but the problem with the New York standards is that they far exceed international and Canadian standards.

Technology doesn't exist: shipping industry - "There is no technology out there that can meet the New York standards," he told CBC's Quebec AM Tuesday. "What effectively New York is doing is stopping shipping into the Great Lakes." Bowie said ships carrying Canadian grain and ore to export markets must pass through New York waters, as two of the locks of the St. Lawrence Seaway are in New York. He added that existing regulations targeted at invasive species have proven effective. Anthony Ricciardi, a professor of biology at McGill University, acknowledged that no new invaders have been discovered since 2006, when Canadian regulations commonly known as "swish and spit" went into effect. Those rules have forced all ships to flush their ballast tanks in the open ocean, then refill them with salty seawater to kill any freshwater organisms before they enter the St. Lawrence Seaway. However, Jennifer Caddick, executive director of the environmental group Save the Rivers in Clayton, N.Y., said she thinks New York's tougher new rules are a good idea. "I'm just not willing to take the risk of damaging this freshwater resource for future generations," said Caddick, who has a family cottage on the seaway. "Who knows what the next invader would be that could come in and damage this water supply?" She added that she doesn't think the new rules will shut down shipping in the Great Lakes. "I think that's a little alarmist. It's time for the shipping industry to get these technologies on board their ships." Bowie said he thinks it's unlikely, since companies that develop technologies for ships are interested in meeting international standards so they can sell their products around the world. He doubts they would take the trouble to develop technologies specifically for the small fraction of ships that pass through the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Nova posts profit that skyrockets to \$225M
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – August 12, 2011

Nova Chemicals said higher margins for its plastics and chemicals products boosted second-quarter profits nearly fivefold, to \$225 million, from \$46 million in the second quarter of 2010. Sales were \$1.4 billion, up from \$1.2 billion a year ago. Nova, based in Canada with executive offices in Moon, is a subsidiary of International Petroleum Investment Co. of the United Arab Emirates. Nova said profits improved because selling prices increased more than the cost of raw materials. The company has announced several recent deals to use ethane from the Marcellus Shale basin to supply its plants in Canada.

Cheektowaga cheesecake maker weighs its expansion options
Buffalo News - August 7, 2011

The frozen cheesecake business has been good to Culinary Arts Specialties. So good that the Cheektowaga company needs to expand its production capacity and is deciding where to do that. The Keller family members who run the business want it to be clear that Culinary Arts' operation on Union Road and its roughly 100 jobs are staying put. What they are deliberating is where to carry out the expansion, either in Western New York or in some other state. "We want to grow the business here in Western New York," said Arthur Keller Jr., vice president and director of plant operations. "However, we need a level playing field with our competition. And that's what it really comes down to." Culinary Arts has received offers of incentives from states like North Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin and Kansas, as well as Canada. Company leaders recently met with Buffalo-area economic development officials, Empire State Development and the New York Power Authority to talk about the expansion plan. At the moment, Culinary Arts can produce, pack and ship 35,000 to 40,000 family-size cheesecakes per day. It exports about 80 percent of its output, much of that to Canada. But the company has reached its maximum production capacity at its Union Road plant, which it moved into in 2006, much faster than anticipated, said Andrew P. Keller, vice president of sales and marketing. The company does not disclose sales figures, but he said its sales have doubled since entering the new plant five years ago. Meanwhile, Culinary Arts intends to grow even more, through making greater inroads in the U.S. market. While it needs more production space, the company wants to keep costs in check, in order to effectively compete with U.S. rivals. Power costs are a prime issue the Kellers said. "The competition's fierce in the United States," Arthur Keller Jr. said. "We've got our manufacturing processes down pat. We've got a wonderful staff. We have all the ingredients. Now we just need to compete with some of the states where our competition is. "We're not looking for corporate welfare," he said. "We're simply looking to level it out." Culinary Arts envisions a multiphase expansion, the first step of which is estimated at \$600,000 to \$700,000. That phase would create more freezer and packaging space, and an additional maintenance area. Subsequent expansion, estimated at several million dollars, would involve new product lines that would require much more space. Even if Culinary Arts opts to carry out that expansion phase locally, the company would have to find a different site around here, since its existing Union Road site does not have enough room to accommodate it. "Over five to 10 years, we want to double in size, no question about it. I don't think there's any reason we couldn't do that," Arthur Keller Jr. said, referring to the prospects of doubling sales revenues, facility size and probably its number of employees, as well. Andrew Keller said he would like to see Empire State Development provide a complete presentation of the programs and incentives Culinary Arts could tap into if it expands here, similar to what other states have provided. He said he feels Culinary Arts missed out on some program opportunities when it built the new plant several years ago, and he doesn't want that to happen again. Beth O'Keefe, business development officer with ECIDA, said the agency has worked with Culinary Arts before, on the plant it built in Cheektowaga. O'Keefe and representatives of Empire State Development and the Power Authority said they have had preliminary talks with Culinary Arts and were awaiting specific requests from the company. Culinary Arts was started by Andrew and Arthur Jr.'s grandfather and was incorporated in 1982. Its current president and chief executive officer is their father, Arthur Keller Sr. The company spotted an opportunity for high-quality frozen cheesecakes in the Canadian market years ago and built upon it, establishing a widespread presence among that country's retailers. But the company's name still probably is not familiar to local residents. "We fly under the radar, intentionally," Andrew Keller said. "We've been very quiet. It's served us well in Canada. We're fairly unknown. We're a private label producer." Confidentiality agreements prevent them from identifying most of their retail customers, but the Kellers mention Tops and Wegmans stores as a couple of places their products can be found. The Kellers say they want to get started soon on the expansion and hope to make a decision within a few months. "This [Cheektowaga plant] isn't going anywhere," Arthur Keller Jr. said. "However, we are going to need more capacity. We have more opportunities than we can shake a stick at."

Greenway funds to enhance War of 1812 events
Niagara Gazette - August 9, 2011

Officials in Lewiston will use \$325,000 in New York Power Authority relicensing funds to re-enact a historic battle from the War of 1812 and build a bronze monument to members of the Tuscarora Indian Nation who fought bravely during the conflict. The Host Communities Standing Committee, a local group that oversees the allocation of relicensing dollars for projects along the so-called Niagara River Greenway, unanimously approved allocations for both projects during a meeting on Tuesday. Representatives from the village and town of Lewiston and the Lewiston Historical Association intend to use \$25,000 to commemorate and re-enact the Battle of Queenston Heights, the first major battle of the war. They will use the remaining \$300,000 to construct the "Tuscarora Heroes Monument," a bronze statue to be located at the corner of Center Street and Portage Road that will honor Native Americans from the Tuscarora Nation who saved the lives of white settlers when they were attacked by British troops. Both projects are key aspects of Lewiston's larger plans to commemorate next year's bicentennial of the War of 1812. Organizers believe the celebration will draw thousands of visitors to the Lewiston area next year while promoting aspects of the Niagara River and the vision of the Greenway in the process. "Western New York, Niagara County and, in particular, Lewiston, was on the front lines of this conflict," said former Niagara County lawmaker Lee Simonson who is overseeing plans for the historical association's bicentennial celebration. "Over half of the casualties that occurred in the entire war, across the country and in Canada, occurred within a 30-mile radius of Niagara Falls. This gives us a golden opportunity to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime event." The actual Battle of Queenston Heights took place Oct. 13, 1812. The re-enactment is scheduled for Oct. 12 to 14, 2012 and is expected to involve hundreds of volunteer organizers and re-enactors from both sides of the border. The re-enactment will coincide with other War of 1812 events being planned in Lewiston and in Ontario where Canadian officials have earmarked millions of dollars to support various bicentennial activities. "This is going to put Western New York on the forefront nationally in terms of the attention that is going to be directed toward this celebration," Simonson said. Plans call for the monument to be dedicated on Dec. 19, 2013, 200 years to the day when historical accounts suggest a band of Tuscarora men saved villagers from invading British troops. "The United States government has never thanked the Tuscaroras. The New York state government has never thanked the Tuscaroras. Lewiston has never officially done it. This is our time in history to make sure we right a wrong in terms of gratitude and appreciation," Simonson said.

B. Border Communications

Minister Toews meets with the Canadian Trucking Alliance

Toronto, August 9, 2011 — The Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, today met with officials from the Canadian Trucking Alliance where he participated in a live broadcast to members, highlighting the Government's continuing actions to ensure a safe, secure and efficient border.

"A healthy and vibrant trucking sector is vital to the Canadian economy and to our continued recovery from the global economic recession, said Minister Toews. "One key to the overall health of Canada's trucking industry is a smart and efficient border. The Government of Canada is working hard to improve conditions on the border for our truckers, and we are achieving results."

During the webcast, Minister Toews highlighted a number of initiatives that the Government has already undertaken to improve the border, including the joint Declaration on Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness, announced by Prime Minister Harper and President Obama on February 4th, 2011. Both countries are now in the process of developing an ambitious action plan that will keep our borders open to legitimate traders and travelers, and closed to those who would do us harm.

Minister Toews also addressed the issue of cargo truck thefts and indicated the Government of Canada will work with the Canadian Trucking Alliance to examine whether additional legislation is required to address this growing criminal activity.

Canadian Trucking Alliance Hosts Discussion on Border Issues, Cargo Crime with Minister of Public Safety

(Toronto) – The Canadian Trucking Alliance hosted a discussion with Canada’s Public Safety Minister, Vic Toews, carriers and drivers at its Toronto head office today. On the agenda, naturally were Canada-US border and trade issues as well as the growing problem of cargo crime. About a dozen carriers and drivers attended the meeting in person, while another 25 or so were able to participate in the meeting electronically via web conference technology. The meeting provided the minister with a first-hand account from the people most impacted by the current situation at the border and by cargo crime. It also provided him with the opportunity to inform the industry of action his government has already taken or is contemplating.

It is hoped that the meeting will contribute not only to a better mutual understanding of each other’s concerns and actions but that it will feed directly into both the Regulatory Cooperation Council and the Beyond the Border Working Group -- two consultative bodies formed after Prime Minister Harper’s and President Obama’s announcement of negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement on a joint perimeter security strategy.

David Bradley, CTA’s president and CEO said “We are delighted the minister took the time to come and visit with the industry directly. There’s nothing like hearing for himself about the issues the people that live and breathe the border daily are encountering.” Among the issues raised during the discussion included such topics as in-transit movements, re-positioning of foreign empty trailers, true mutual recognition of the trusted trader programs PIP and C-TPAT, due process and appeals for trusted traders, flexibility in the application of FAST lane policies, integration between CBSA and other departments, infrastructure investments and the utilization of existing technologies to expedite legitimate traffic flows.

On cargo crime, the industry is calling for increased enforcement resources to be allocated to the problem and for the courts to begin handing out stiffer penalties for cargo crimes as provided under the government’s new “tough on crime” legislation. CTA noted that organized crime syndicates are playing an increasing role in cargo crimes. “While the trucking industry has made substantial investments in security programs and policies, organized criminals are not deterred,” says Bradley. “In the absence of a greater enforcement effort and penalties, the return from cargo crime is seen as far outweighing the risk by many criminals.”

“We hope to raise awareness of the scope and seriousness of cargo crime, of its true costs to my industry, to the supply chain and to the Canadian economy as a whole to provide you and us with the legal framework, the tools and the resources to take this increasingly lucrative and violent crime on and to apprehend and convict, with appropriate sentences, the organized crime syndicates and other criminals that perpetrate these crimes.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 8, 2011

SCHUMER & TONKO ATTEND GROUNDBREAKING AT BRAND NEW UTILITY CONTROL CENTER THAT WILL CREATE NEW JOBS IN THE CAPITAL REGION – ANNOUNCE \$74 MILLION IN SMART GRID INVESTMENTS TO SAVE RATEPAYERS MILLIONS

Federal Dept. of Energy Grant Enables NYISO To Make \$74 Million Investment In Smart Grid Technology That Will Lower Energy Costs For NY Families & Small Businesses

State-of-the-Art Control Center Facility Will Replace Oldest Control Center In The Country, Creating Hundreds of Construction Jobs and Adding 20 Permanent Positions

Schumer, Tonko: This Investment Will Lower Energy Costs For NY Families, Create New Jobs In Capital Region

Today, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer and Congressman Paul Tonko announced a \$74 million investment in smart grid technology that will lower energy costs for families and small businesses across New York. The investment, half of which will be funded through a Department of Energy grant, will save approximately \$10 million per year in energy costs by improving the quality of the grid and installing new technology to improve energy efficiency. Schumer and Tonko also participated in a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction on a brand new NYISO control center. The current building, the oldest of its kind in the entire country, will be replaced by a state-of-the-art facility that will support hundreds of construction jobs and eventually add 20 new jobs to Rensselaer County.

“Today, we’re not just breaking ground on a state-of-the-art facility, we’re flipping on an economic light switch for the Capital Region,” said Senator Schumer. “This project is going to support hundreds of construction jobs, twenty new jobs when all is said and done, and will help update our energy grid to spur even more economic development across upstate New York. The new smart grid will save ratepayers millions of dollars every year, and help stave off the kind of blackouts that can drive the economy to a total stand-still. This is a great day for the Capital Region and the NYISO.”

“This groundbreaking marks the first step in building a new foundation for New York’s energy infrastructure that will lead us to incorporating smart grid technologies and renewable energy sources into our power delivery system,” said Congressman Paul Tonko. “The federal investment we see here today will create new jobs and improve the electric grid’s efficiency and reliability for all New Yorkers.”

The smart grid installations and construction of a brand new control center will help NYISO improve the reliability of the power grid, and streamline the efficiency of power transmission. The control center will serve as a sort of central nervous system for New York’s power grid, where changing conditions and data from all over the state can be received, interpreted, and then used to more efficiently allocate power to families and small businesses. The technological improvements and resulting grid will lead to about \$10 million in savings each year throughout New York.

The control center facility will be a boon to the local Rensselaer economy, helping to support several hundred jobs during the construction phase, and eventually housing an additional twenty employees when it is completed. The facility should be completed in 2014. The current control center in Guilderland will undergo a comprehensive overhaul to serve as the backup command center, with work expected to be completed next year.

Schumer strongly supports the \$74 million smart grid initiative, which involves installing capacitor banks and phasor measurement units (PMUs) on the transmission system throughout New York. The banks will save consumers millions each year by reducing the amount of electricity that is lost when carried over long distances along the more than 10,000 miles of power lines in the state. The phasor measurement units will help the provide grid operators with critical data about performance in the grid, allowing them to make adjustments and improve overall efficiency, saving additional funds.

In the future, the PMU network in New York can be linked with those in New England, the mid-Atlantic, Canada, and other regional grids to prevent blackouts like the one that hit the Northeast in 2003.

“Gone are the days when we’re tossing money and power overboard as electricity goes from one end of the state to the other,” continued Schumer. “This investment is going to be a jolt to the Capital Region, and put money back in the bank for families and small business owners.”

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Cross often? Make it simple, use NEXUS

NEXUS is designed to expedite the border clearance process for low-risk, pre-approved travellers into Canada and the United States. <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/nexus/menu-eng.html>

Embassy: Canada's Foreign Policy Newsweekly - <http://www.embassymag.ca/>

C. Editorials/Columns

Opportunity knocks, and it is green Buffalo News - August 8, 2011

There’s a \$450 million opportunity slipping by. It could be the thing that helps transform this region into a place better known for its beautiful shoreline than for decaying steel plants and Chemical Row. Or it could be just another thing we look back at in 50 years and wonder why. Folks from Buffalo to Youngstown have been given the resources—\$9 million a year for 50 years—to create a “world-class corridor of places, parks and landscapes” along the 36-mile stretch from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. This is no Bass Pro Shops. It’s no silver bullet. It’s real money committed to a vision to create a system of parks, trails and other amenities that would connect communities and create more ways for people to enjoy the waterfront. For years, we’ve concentrated on a 21-acre zone in Buffalo’s Erie Canal Harbor that we hope one day will be developed with shops, restaurants

and commercial development. But while the region's been focused on what's the next best thing for the slice of waterfront outside HSBC Arena, the clock is ticking for the Niagara River Greenway. The money is flowing, and those who make the decisions about how it should be spent have been dividing up the funds now for four years. More than 70 projects from Wheatfield to Grand Island have already been pitched, started or completed. New parks have opened. Trails have been cleared. Ecological projects are under way. But there's a disconnect between a 163-page plan that laid out the vision for the Niagara River Greenway and those given the power to spend the money. State lawmakers created the Niagara River Greenway Commission in 2005 to develop a regional system of parks that could connect the region to the river. But the commission was given no control over how the money would actually be spent. Instead, it simply reviews projects for "consistency" with the greenway plan. And whether projects are deemed "consistent" or not, they still can get funding. The \$450 million comes from a settlement for the relicensing of the New York Power Authority's Niagara Power Project, and communities that signed the agreement insisted they have the final say over funding. As a result, there are four separate committees that decide how the money should be spent. Here's a sampling of projects that have been given the go-ahead: a dog park in Lewiston; a one-time shot of funding for summer programs in Artpark; money to celebrate the Boundary Waters Treaty. And there are at least five "comfort stations" — more commonly known as bathrooms — on the list of greenway projects. It's not that bathrooms aren't needed in parks. But a bunch of new restrooms and playgrounds just doesn't add up to the "world-class greenway" officials set out to create. A \$450 million opportunity doesn't come along every day. "Most fundamentally," the plan states, "the Greenway is a means to forge better connections across the region." Look across the river, and you'll see what long-term planning across communities can achieve. Ontario's Niagara River Recreational Trail extends from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Fort Erie, making it possible to ride your bike, walk or just enjoy the view along 35 miles of water. On this side of the border, we're still suffering from the type of fragmented thinking in which Erie and Niagara counties might as well be on separate planets. We can look back in 2057 and marvel at the community vision and cooperation it took to transform our waterfront from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario into a "world-class" system of interconnected parks, trails and waterfront amenities. Or we can wonder why we frittered it away on pork barrel projects.

Canada's version of John Adams - by Peter Black
Plattsburgh Press Republican - August 12, 2011

I've spent a goodly chunk of my vacation with John Adams. That's not some visiting relative who won't leave, but the HBO series on the second U.S. president. It's been running on Canada's History channel for the past five weeks, and I've been taping it in anticipation of having the time to sit down and watch it in an extended stretch. I am untroubled by the fact the series debuted in 2008; after all, the basic facts of the remarkable story have not changed in the 185 years since Adams died (on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the same day as Thomas Jefferson passed — but I guess all Americans know this). Having spent so much time watching Paul Giamatti and cast sweat through 50 of the formative years of the USA in powdered wigs and heavy wool frocks, I am left with several thoughts. One is how well the series succeeds in capturing the human drama of the American uprising against the British and the creation of a new country. That's probably a tribute to how well the producers adapted the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography by David McCullough. I'm also left thinking who might be the Canadian equivalent of John Adams, an individual who had a crucial role in the creation of his country and without whom things could have gone badly, very differently — or nowhere. Of course the circumstances leading to the creation of each country are quite distinct, but the key common denominator is that both colonial entities had to find a way to shake off the Brits. Adams and company did so with a unilateral declaration of independence backed by a willingness to shed blood. British North Americans, by contrast, had to wheedle and wangle their way out of the British grip, and, we should note, the job remains unfinished since Elizabeth 2 is still constitutionally queen of Canada. Regardless, based on my scanty grasp of Canadian history, the nominee for the John Adams award for most important contribution to the overthrow of British rule in Canada is: Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, financier and future Father of Confederation. Galt was not the first advocate of unifying the British colonies of Canada — Upper Canada (Ontario), Lower Canada (Quebec), New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island — into a single entity independent of Britain. But, the Sherbrooke and Montreal-based land developer and railway baron was the first to take

effective action and devise a detailed plan for confederation. In 1858, as a leader in Lower Canada, he led a small delegation to London to seek talks on colonial union. According to one history text "to Galt we owe the introduction of the policy into practical politics." Like, we might say, the ever-practical Adams. To put some teeth to his conviction that confederation was the only way to go, Galt made it a condition of his acceptance to serve in the Canadian colonial government that it take the lead in the pursuit of a federation of the British American colonies. It should be noted that Galt was motivated at least in part by his interest in the protection of Quebec's interests. By being part of a larger union, the province would be better able to defend its language rights, rather than be overwhelmed by rapidly growing Ontario. Galt thus recruited the most powerful French-Canadian figure of the day and his business colleague, Sir George-Etienne Cartier, the essential partner of the man who became a key negotiator of Confederation and Canada's first prime minister in 1867, Sir John A. Macdonald.

So, had it not been for Galt, Canada today would be ... well, who knows? We do know that unlike Adams, Galt did not go on to become the first minister of his country. But, like Adams had been for the United States of America, Galt was the first official diplomatic envoy to Great Britain after Canada, in its turn and in its own way, had declared its independence from the mother country. - ***Peter Black is a radio broadcaster and writer based in Quebec City. He has worked on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, in Montreal as a newspaper reporter and editor, and as a translator and freelance writer. He can be reached at pblack@videotron.ca.***

D. Citizens Views (write-in letters)

Niagara Falls Bridge Commission pays its fair share - By Patrick Brown Buffalo News - August 8, 2011

A recent article in The Buffalo News reported on how some nonprofits like the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission have acted in making payments in lieu of taxes to local governments for services municipalities and school districts provide to such non-profits. I'd like to expand upon that a bit and explain how the commission allocates revenues to enhance communities on both sides of our most crucial international border. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission is by law a tax-exempt, binational entity not required to pay property taxes in the United States. Nevertheless, it voluntarily makes payments in lieu of taxes, known as PILOTs, to local governments. These are based on assessed values and applicable tax/special district rates. There are five taxing jurisdictions on the American side where we operate our three bridges — Rainbow, Whirlpool and Lewiston-Queenston. Since 1985, the commission has made a total of \$6.07 million in PILOT payments to the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, Town of Lewiston and the school districts of Lewiston-Porter and Niagara Falls. These payments are comparable to what a taxpaying entity would have paid in property taxes. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission's mission is to facilitate commerce and provide secure, safe and efficient movement of people and goods across the three bridges. We are also interested in the economies of the United States and Canada and the benefits of creating an economic synergy in the region we serve. We see development of the culinary school not far from the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls, the intermodal transportation/rail station and Underground Railroad interpretive center, both near the Whirlpool Bridge, as positive community and regional developments and that's why we support them. Such interest in and commitment to the communities we operate in is additionally reflected in our community donations, which are over and above our payments in lieu of taxes. We annually distribute \$100,000 — \$50,000 each in the United States and Canada—to various not-for-profit entities in support of a variety of programs. Those payments have exceeded \$900,000 since the program's inception. The commission is also supporting work by volunteers planning to celebrate the 200th anniversary next year of the War of 1812. The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission is appreciative for the services provided by the local governments and fully compensates each, as well as the communities they serve, accordingly. We also want citizens using the bridges to know the Whirlpool Bridge is NEXUS only and we urge motorists to take advantage of that fastest of crossing methods. We do more than cross the mighty Niagara, however; we draw people and communities together. - ***Patrick Brown is chairman of the board of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.***